

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL SITREP MR-1, AUGUST 15, 1973

THE FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON FROM DANANG 15 AUGUST 73

REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO. QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L D A N A N G 1 0 2 0

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SUBJECT: CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL SITREP MR-1, AUGUST 15, 1973

1. SECURITY SITUATION:

A. AUGUST 14 - I CORPS HEADQUARTERS BRIEFING:

TEN CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS WERE REPORTED CONSISTING OF EIGHT ATTACKS BY FIRE AND TWO HARASSMENTS. GVN CASUALTIES: SEVEN KIA AND 30 MIA. PRG/NVA CASUALTIES: THIRTY-FIVE KIA, ONE RETURNEE. TEN ROUNDS OF FRIENDLY ARTILLERY FIRED NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS; FIVE HUNDRED FIFTY-EIGHT FIRED SOUTH.

B. AUGUST 15 - FIVE CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS REPORTED CONSISTING OF ONE ATTACK BY FIRE AND FOUR HARASSMENTS. GVN CASUALTIES:

THREE KIA, TWENTY-SIX WIA. PRG/NVA CASUALTIES: TWENTY-FIVE KIA, CONFIDENTIAL

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ONE RETURNEE. ELEVEN ROUNDS OF FRIENDLY ARTILLERY FIRED NORTH

OF THE HAI VAN PASS; THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-THREE FIRED SOUTH.

C. ARRO DIRECTOR, HUE, REPORTS THAT I CORPS FORWARD G-2 HAS INTELLIGENCE THAT THE ENEMY HAS STATIONED ONE BATTALION OF THE FIFTH NVA REGIMENT EAST OF BACH MA MOUNTAIN (ZC060915) TO STEP UP HARASSMENT OF RVN ROAD-BUILDING EFFORTS. EXTENSION OF THE ROAD UP THE MOUNTAIN HAS SLOWED DOWN CONSIDERABLY IN THE PAST WEEK BECAUSE OF ENEMY MINING AND SNIPER ATTACKS AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT THE ARVN ENGINEERS HAVE NOW REACHED MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TERRAIN. COMMENT: IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY UNLIKELY THAT THE ROAD WILL BE FINISHED BEFORE THE RAINY SEASON BEGINS AND WHEN THE WEATHER WILL PRECLUDE HELICOPTER RESUPPLY MISSIONS ALREADY DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF ENEMY AA IN THE AREA. IN THIS EVENT THE RF BATTALION WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO GIVE UP ITS POST ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP.

2. SENATE ELECTIONS AND PARTY ORGANIZATION:

A. THE THUA THIEN DEPUTY PROVICE CHIEF, MR. HO VAN CUONG, CHARGED WITH ORGANIZIN THE UPPER HOUSE ELECTION AND WITH INSURING A VICTORY FOR THE DAN CHU AND WWHIE ELEPHANT SLATES. TOLD ARRO DIRECTOR, HUE, THAT HE EXPECTED CONSIDERABLY FEWER VOTERS THAN FOR THE VILLAG COUNCIL ELECTIONS WHICH HE SAID WAS ONLY 65 TO 70 PERCENT. (COMMENT: IT WAS OFFICIALLY REPORTED AT CLOSE TO 80 PERCENT. END COMMENT). CUONG DID NOT FORSEE MANY VOTES FOR THE OPPOSITION SLATES SINCE THEIR REPRESENTATIVES HAD NOT EVEN ACCOMPANIED THE DAN CHU AND WHITE ELEPHANT CANDIDATES WHEN THOSE TWO SLATES CAMPAIGNED IN HUE ON AUGUST 9 AT WHICH TIME THE CANDIDATES SENT TROUGH THE FORMALITY OF CALLING ON BUDDHIST LEADER THICH THANH TRI, UNIVERSITY RECTOR LE THANH MINH, AND CATHOLIC LEADER, FATHER LOC.

B. THE DAN CHU PARTY OF QUANG TIN HELD A COMP MEETING IN BINH TU VILLAGE OF THANG BINH DISTRICT ON 8-9 AUGUST ATTENDED BY ELEVEN THOUSAND RPEOPLE, SIXTY-FIVE PERCENT GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. THERE WAS A VIRTUAL FOUR-DAY MORATORIUM OF WORK AT ALL LEVELS IN THE PROVINCE AND THE PROVINCE CHIEF IS SAID TO HAVE ORDERED NINE CMployees FROM EACH SERVICE TO ATTEND OR ASSIST IN THE PREPARATION. ALL THE PROVINCIAL DAN CHU LEADERS WERE THERE AND THE SPEAKERS STRESSED THE PARTY PLATFORM AND THE PROGRESS THE PARTY HAD MADE IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS. THE PUBLIC WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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CAUGHT UP IN THE FESTIVE MOOD BUT SHOWED LITTLE INTEREST IN THE CAMPAIGN ITSELF OR THE PARTY RHETORIC. STILL, THE PARTY, WITH THE HELP OF THE GOVERNMENT, GOT OUT THE CROWDS. THE PROVINCE CHIEF IS USING THE GOVERNMENT APPARATUS TO PUBLICIZE THE ELECTION. THE VIS, PSDF, RD CADRE, AND OTHER ORGANS ARE DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION AND ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO REGISTER AND VOTE. THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE COMPLAINED ABOUT THE PRESSURE APPLIED AT ALL LEVELS TO VOTE FOR THE DAN CHU AND

WHITE ELEPHANT SLATES. THERE ARE FEW SLATE POSTERS UP BUT THE PPRO OFFICE STAFF SAW NONE FOR THE FOURTH SLATE IN THE PROVINCE CAPITAL.

3. ECONOMICS AND TRADE WITH THE ENEMY:

A. QUANG NGAI POLITICAL OFFICER REPORTS THAT TWO WEEKS AGO THE BINH SON DISTRICT CHIEF, HIS S-ONE, S-TWO AND S-THREE WERE ALL DETAINED FOR TRADING WITH THE ENEMY. THE PROVINCE CHIEF IS SENDING A DELEGATION OF SERVICE CHIEFS TO TRA BONG DISTRICT TOWN TO INVESTIGATE TRADE OF RICE TO THE PRG FOR CINNAMON. THE POLITICAL OFFICER HAS BEEN TOLD THAT IN RESPONSE TO THESE REPORTS GENERAL TRUONG CUT OFF RICE DELIVERIES TO TRA BONG FOUR WEEKS AGO. FURTHER, ON 14 AUGUST GENERAL LAC, DEPUTY MR-1 COMMANDER AND MSS BG HAUAN FROM SAIGON CONFERRED WITH THE PROVINCE CHIEF.

B. ARRO DIRECTOR, HUE, REPORTS THAT THUA THIEN DEPQY PROVINCE CHIEF CUONG BELIEVES THAT THE PRICE OF RICE HASN STABILIZED FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS. HOWEVER, HE GAVE A FIGURE OF TWENTY TO THIRTY PERCENT LOSS OF THE SEPTEMBER RICE CROP CAUSED BY THE RECENT TYPHOON AS OPPOSED TO A FIGURE OF TEN PERCENT REPORTED PREVIOUSLY BY OTHER PROVINCE OFFICIALS. IN ANTICIPATION OF FUTURE SHORTAGES, CUONG HAS ORDERED THAT A PROVINCIAL RICE RESERVE OF TWO THOUSAND TONS BE MAINTAINED. BE ALSO PLANS TO PREVENT DANANG MERCHANTS FROM BUYING UP ANY OF THE SEPTEMBER CROP. CUONG MAINTAINS THAT VC RICE PROCUREMENT HAS BEEN MINIMAL AND IS OF NO CAUSE FOR CONCERN.

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